

Office on Asian and Pacific Islander Affairs



Annual Report 2004



Government of the District of Columbia
Anthony A. Williams, Mayor

The Mayor's Office on Asian and Pacific Islander Affairs
G. Greg Chen, Executive Director

Introduction

The Mayor's Office on Asian and Pacific Islander Affairs (OAPIA), created in 1987, serves as the liaison between the Government of the District of Columbia and a growing Asian and Pacific Islander (API) population in the District of Columbia. OAPIA's mission is to ensure that a full range of health, education, employment, and social services are accessible and provided to the API community members through working with all levels of the District of Columbia government and community members.

The 2000 Census shows that the API population in DC increased fastest among all ethnic groups. The API population consists of more than 20 ethnic groups, the largest being Chinese, Asian Indians, Filipinos, Vietnamese and Koreans. Census information also shows that 8,974 of the District's API population spoke an Asian language at home and half of them could not speak English 'very well'. DC Public Schools (DCPS) data showed that two-thirds of the API students in DCPS were either non-English proficient or limited English proficient (LEP). According to the Washington Post, APIs owned almost two-thirds of the small business licenses in DC and they contributed a great deal to the city's revenue. Increasing the public awareness of this emerging minority and their needs and engaging the API community for civic participation became OAPIA's priorities in FY 2004.

WHO ARE APIs?

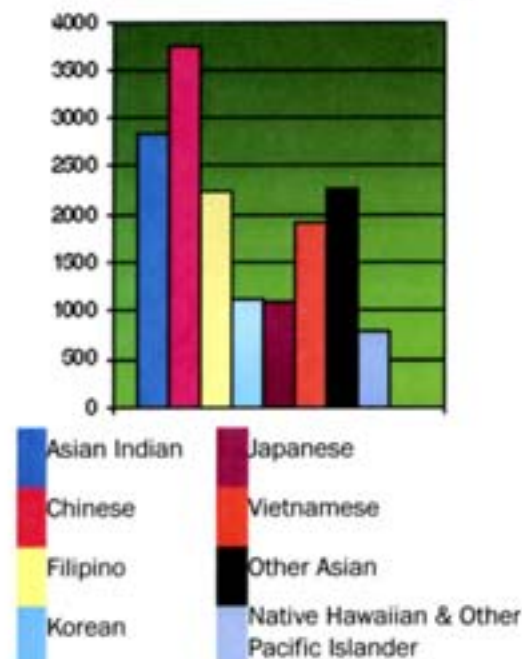
"Asian" refers to those having origins in any of the original people of the Far East, Southeast Asia, or the Indian Subcontinent including for example, China, Cambodia, India, Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam. "Pacific Islander" refers to those having origins in any of the original people of Hawaii, Guam, Samoa, or other Pacific Islands.

WHERE MOST APIs LIVE IN D.C.

Ward 1	4.2%
Ward 2	7.7%
Ward 3	6.2%

*Source: US Census Bureau,
DC Office on Planning

API Population in DC by Ethnicity



Total API Population in DC 18,741

Advocacy

Language Access Coordination

In FY04, OAPIA continued to spearhead the Mayor's API Initiative to provide equal access to city services for the city's LEP population through translating vital documents, hiring bilingual employees, providing cultural training to city employees, strengthening of community partnerships and outreach. Charged to administer and coordinate the implementation of the Initiative, OAPIA worked in collaboration with 17 District agencies in implementing their annual plans and providing to the community on a regular basis updates on agencies' implementation efforts. OAPIA also provided agencies with technical assistance and trainings relating to the Initiative.

In April 2004, Mayor Williams signed into law the Language Access Act (LAA), which mandates DC government agencies to provide translation and interpretation to emerging populations who have limited English proficiency. OAPIA worked with Office on Latino Affairs (OLA), Office on Human Rights (OHR), and the Community Language Access Coalition to set up standards and procedures for the implementation of the Act. An interagency agreement between OAPIA, OLA and OHR was established to formalize their commitment to the implementation of the Act.

HIGHLIGHTS OF OAPIA's COORDINATION

- Devoted a full-time staff member to coordinate the implementation of the LAA;
- Met and communicated with District agencies regularly on community needs

and feedback;

- Facilitated quarterly meetings with participating agencies.
- Developed, compiled and translated a glossary of the most frequently used terms in the District into three major Asian languages to standardize translation of terminology.
- Coordinated with the Office on Latino Affairs and Brookings Institute in organizing the Mayor's Immigrant Forum to share and update the region's immigration trends, challenges, and implementation efforts of the LAA.

"As the District residents are becoming more culturally, economically, and racially diverse, the need to ensure equal access for all can no longer be overlooked. I am making it a top level government commitment to see that our materials and services, whether performed in house or contracted out, reflect the needs of the District residents and business establishments."

(Mayor's memo to DC agencies on August 8, 2000)



The Mayor's signing ceremony of the Language Access Act

Community Outreach

To reach out and educate API residents and merchants about District's programs and services, OAPIA conducted numerous neighborhood visits, organized 9 workshops, and published monthly newsletters. OAPIA also assisted various cases ranging from information inquiry to housing, employment, safety, and business issues.

A. Resident Outreach:

OAPIA conducted a total of four informational workshops on housing and safety to inform residents about affordable housing projects and options, public safety issues including crimes stats and safety tips. All the workshops were conducted in the neighborhoods accessible by Asian immigrant residents while interpretation was provided.



Ms. Diane Oliver (left) of the Department of Housing Authority shares information on housing at a Chinatown workshop while OAPIA staff Dory Peters (right) interprets for LEP residents.

B. Merchant Outreach:

OAPIA conducted three merchant workshops during FY2004. In addition, OAPIA outreach team visited a number of small businesses throughout the city to inform them of business regulations, compliances, safety alerts, customer



Safety Workshop at a Chinatown apartment building.



Mayor Williams with Korean American Merchants and OAPIA staff Soohyun Koo.

relations, and other relevant issues.

C. Youth Outreach:

OAPIA believes that empowering the youth today helps make responsible adults of tomorrow. Thus, OAPIA created a platform to motivate and engage API youth by organizing several workshops and other programs for API youth who often face issues such as language barriers, cultural alienation, peer pressure, gang involvement and substance abuse.

- **Youth Career Workshop:** OAPIA organized a youth career workshop in June to help API high school students of immigrant backgrounds establish a positive attitude towards school and studies and motivate them through positive role models.
- **Youth Forum:** The "GenerAsian Next" Youth Conference in August brought together both API and non-API youth for dialogues on relevant topics such as race and cultural sensitivity. Mayor Williams took time off his busy schedule to share with the youth his views on school related issues and his personal experiences as mayor running the city's operations.
- **Mentor Referral Program:** In the summer of 2004, OAPIA launched Mentorship Referral Program on its website to attract local college students and professionals to help mentoring the at-risk youth at community-based organizations. Asian youth often face issues such as language barriers, cultural alienation, peer pressure, gang involvement and substance abuse. OAPIA established agreements with Asian American LEAD,



Mayor Williams chats with API and other youth in "GenerAsian Next" Youth Workshop.

Boat People SOS, Chinatown Service Center and Vietnamese-American Community Service Center, through which potential mentor candidates were referred and selected. About 10 mentors were referred through the program.

D. Communication:

Through extensive outreach efforts in various formulae, OAPIA was able to contact over 4,000 API members to send out monthly E-Newsletters, disseminate information on government programs, services, and mayoral activities. OAPIA was able to double the number of members in its database. Besides, OAPIA's outreach activities and programs were mentioned by various ethnic media for about 80 different times.

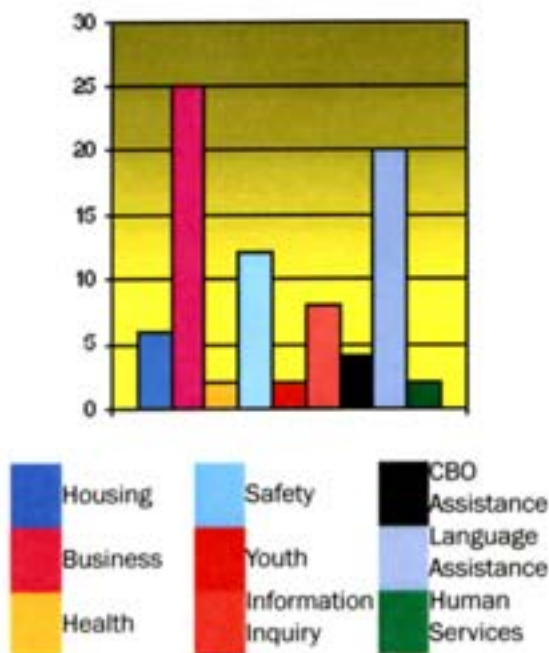
- **E-Newsletters:** OAPIA utilized its monthly E-Newsletter to improve communication with the general public by posting online major OAPIA's events, funding/employment opportunities, community activities, Mayoral events, and other community-based activities.

E. CBO Capacity Building:

In the API immigrant community, there are over 100 community based non-profit organizations who often act as a hub of information, services and gathering. In order to serve the community more effectively, OAPIA strived to build and develop a close working relationship with some major service providers in the community. Thus helping these organizations in building up their organizational capacity and efficiency became a pivotal part of OAPIA's outreach work.

- **Needs-Assessment Survey:** OAPIA conducted a survey among 13 major service providers in the API community to identify the key areas of training needs of these organizations. Based on the survey results, OAPIA may provide training to the CBOs in the future on funding resources, organizational management, and customer service.

Types of Cases Assisted



F. Case Assistance:

In FY 2004, OAPIA provided referral assistance to almost 70 cases involving residents and merchants with language, cultural, and other barriers. Most of these cases covered the areas of public safety, housing, business related issues, and information inquiries. OAPIA also assisted a number of requests from community based organizations on the District agencies' programs and services related issues. Furthermore, the OAPIA outreach team often provided on-site assistance at some of the API community-based organizations so that cases and needs of residents were taken and referred promptly.

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Community Engagement

OAPIA continued its efforts to engage the API community in various public programs and events through its ongoing outreach efforts. While the API population accounted for 3% of a total population in the District, API community's overall participation in the Mayoral events in FY 2004 marked 6%. This shows APIs are not only growing in number, but also increasing their willingness to be more involved in the city's civic process.

A. Citizen Summit III:

OAPIA launched a city-wide drive to encourage LEP residents to participate in the Mayor's Citizen Summit III in FY 04. API residents whose English was limited were sat at 18 designated tables where simultaneous interpretation and bilingual staff were provided to ensure their participation. API community's participation accounted for a total of 10% of all participants.



Discussion at one of the 18 tables designated for APIs with limited English proficiency at Citizen Summit III



Vietnamese community members participate in Citizen Summit III.

B. Asian Heritage Month Celebration:

As May is designated by Congress as the Nation's Asian American Heritage Month, OAPIA organized the Mayor's Annual Asian Heritage Month Celebration in May to promote API cultures and heritage. The Celebration Day attracted more than 300 people from different parts of the city to the Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Library. The month long celebration was highlighted by the following events:



Mayor Williams learns a Filipino folk dance at the API Heritage Month Celebration.

- **Cultural Fair:** For the first time in history, OAPIA successfully engaged 13 embassies and groups to participate in a cultural exhibition featuring the historically rich and diverse cultures of Asia and the Pacific Islands. During the cultural performances groups and individuals representing various ethnic communities demonstrated their talents in music and dancing.



Korean Americans play traditional Taeko drums during the API Heritage Month Celebration

- **"WAsiantonian" TV Show:** OAPIA created a unique television program to showcase the innovative ways the District government had responded to the needs of Asian Pacific Islanders. This one hour long show aired by DC Cable TV in May and June highlighted the District's improved access to government services and the contributions of APIs who live and work in the District.



Community members participate at the "WAsiantonians" Show

- **Map Drawing Project:** The map drawing activity attracted 25 API youth, ages from 6 to 17, to work together as a team to produce a drawing of a map of Asia using various media. The final product was displayed at the Asian Heritage Celebration Cultural Exhibition in Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Library.



Asian Map Drawing Activity for API Youth of different ages.

- **API Volunteers Photo Exhibition:** OAPIA took, solicited and selected pictures of dedicated API volunteers in the community to put on display in the library.